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SOME 4-H GUIDEPOSTS FOR 1939

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Department of Agriculture

National 4-H Club Program  
January 7, 1939.

A conversation between Leon Clayton, Asst. State Leader, South Carolina, Bert Roger, Club Agent, St. Lawrence County, N. Y., Paul Dixon, Club Agent, Carroll County, New Hampshire, John Baker, Radio Extension Specialist, U. S. D. A. Broadcast in the National 4-H Club Program, National Farm and Home Hour, over 99 stations associated with the Blue Network of the NBC.

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BAKER:

Today, 4-H Club friends we're going to meet three men who are very much interested in 4-H club work, because they're working with 4-H Club boys and girls and local leaders -- in three different states. I'd like to introduce them in eeny, meeny, miney, mo fashion. First of all -- Leon Clayton -- from South Carolina, assistant state leader of 4-H clubs down there.

CLAYTON:

I guess I'm "eeny" on the list.

BAKER:

That's right -- and "Meeny" -- is Bert Rogers. Suppose you tell us where you're from Bert.

ROGERS:

I'm from St. Lawrence county, New York -- right up on the St. Lawrence River -- I'm county 4-H club agent up there.

BAKER:

Just across the river from Canada. And third among our guests is Paul Dixon. You're a Yankee, aren't you, Paul?

DIXON:

That's right -- from New Hampshire. I'm county club agent in Carroll county, New Hampshire.

BAKER:

So we have New Hampshire, New York, and South Carolina all represented here on this first 4-H club program of 1939. I wonder if one of you will tell us why the three of you happen to be in Washington.

ROGERS:

Well -- all three of us have taken leave of absence from our jobs for a few months to go to school again -- taking some graduate work in the Department of Agriculture here in Washington -- and at some of the Universities in or near the city.

BAKER:

Going to school again. I should think you'd have had enough of school after spending 12 years getting through high school -- and four years or so more in college. What's the big idea Clayton?

(over)

CLAYTON:

Well, to put it briefly, we're going to school again so we can do a better job of working with 4-H club boys and girls.

BAKER:

And what are you studying so you can do this better job you're talking about?

CLAYTON:

Oh -- we're studying several different subjects -- for example sociology -- to get a better idea of how to help in solving some of the problems of living conditions.

BAKER:

Sounds important -- what else?

CLAYTON:

Economics -- so we'll know a little more about the things that make prices what they are -- Problems in land use, and organization in extension work.

DIXON:

And one thing that we're all doing is writing a thesis on 4-H club leaders.

ROGERS:

We're working independently on that -- but it so happens that they're all on the same general subject, local leaders of 4-H clubs.

BAKER:

Now that's something I'd like to know more about. There must be a lot of 4-H club leaders in the United States.

DIXON:

I should say there are a lot. About 135 thousand of them, according to the last estimate I saw.

BAKER:

A hundred and thirty-five thousand men and women -- who work for nothing at least so far as money's concerned. You know -- there must be something that makes them willing to give the time and work that it takes to lead a 4-H Club. Have you found out what it is in the studies that you're making?

CLAYTON:

I think Bert, here, has his thesis study farther along than Paul and I. Probably he's in a better position to answer that than we are.

BAKER:

We turn to you, Rogers.

ROGERS:

Well -- I think I can give you a little information on that. Now -- understand, I haven't talked with all the 135 thousand men and women who are club leaders in the United States.

BAKER:

That would be quite a job.

ROGERS:

I talked with 77 of the leaders in my own county up in New York State. I asked them which things they got the most satisfaction out of -- in being a 4-H Club leader. The thing that most of them got the greatest satisfaction from was being of service to boys and girls.

DIXON:

That's just about what I'd expect. I don't know of very many club leaders who don't enjoy working with boys and girls. If a man or a woman doesn't enjoy young people, then he doesn't make a good club leader as a rule.

CLAYTON:

That's true enough -- and the pleasure that comes from helping young people working with them, and watching them grow and develop is something that money can't buy. But you know, Bert, there's something else that I've had club leaders tell me means a lot to them -- that's the help that they get themselves from the special training that is given to club leaders.

BAKER:

You mean -- the men and women who are 4-H club leaders get training in agriculture and homemaking that ordinary folks don't get?

CLAYTON:

That's it.

ROGERS:

Yes -- that's one thing which these club leaders in my county valued highly; in fact -- they put it in third place among the satisfactions that they get out of being 4-H Club leaders.

DIXON:

If they rated that third -- what did they place second?

ROGERS:

The opportunity to meet people.

BAKER:

The opportunity to meet people. Well -- I guess you don't find any hermits among 4-H Club leaders. The folks who lead clubs like to be with people -- meet them -- and work with them. At least that's been my impression of the club leaders I've known. But you know -- you haven't mentioned one thing that I should think would be important. If I were leading a club, I think I'd like for someone to mention once in a while that they thought I was doing the community some good by my efforts -- or at least have some display of appreciation from club members and their parents.

ROGERS:

Well -- that isn't overlooked. That's one thing that my New York State Club leaders mentioned. In fact, they rated it fourth in importance among the satisfactions that they get out of leading clubs.



CLAYTON:

Then the four principal satisfactions that club leaders get out of their work are the satisfaction of serving boys and girls, the opportunity to meet people, the personal benefits they receive from leadership training, and appreciation of their work.

ROGERS:

That's the story. And I was surprised at the amount of time some of the leaders give to their clubs. There was one leader in my county, Miss Helen Stiles, of Richville -- who reported that she spent over 450 hours in her 4-H leadership work last year.

BAKER:

Four hundred and fifty hours. Let's see -- that's well -- taking a couple of weeks out for the holidays -- that's an hour and a half every day of the year.

ROGERS:

That's right. She has an excellent community club -- of both boys and girls. But even with all the activities that they have going on -- that figure looked rather high to me. So I asked her about it. And she said that she spent that much time, all right. She said this "I got a great deal more from my work with 4-H Club members than I put into it."

CLAYTON:

Evidently she makes boys and girls her project -- just as the boys and girls make calves and pigs and canned goods their projects.

ROGERS:

That's right. She's enthusiastic about personality development of the boys and girls in her club. She works with them a great deal on that one thing and I know of many boys & girls whom she's helped with personal problems.

DIXON:

There's no question about it -- a leader like Miss Stiles does something for the boys and girls -- and for the community as a whole that is of lasting benefit.

BAKER:

I don't think you can get up an argument about that, Dixon. Now -- here's something that I'm wondering about. What's being done to encourage club members to grow up to become leaders themselves?

CLAYTON:

Oh -- there are thousands of cases of that. For example, I'm thinking of Percy Anderson, one of our South Carolina club boys. He was a pig club member for 7 years, and developed a herd of purebred Poland Chinas. He went to Clemson college for two years, and returned home to go into partnership with his father. Today, five years after leaving college, he's manager of the farm, an agricultural leader in the community, active in church and grange work, and he's local leader of his community 4-H club.

DIXON:

Bert -- you were telling me the other day about a family in your county that has quite a record in 4-H Club work.

ROGERS:

Hmmmm-- oh yes -- the Moultons. I could tell about other families, too -- but the Moulton family illustrates the thing we're talking about. There are seven children -- six girls and a boy in this family, and they're all rounding out 10 years of club work apiece. The oldest girl Florence started in club work back in 1925 -- graduated from Cornell University, and is now a teacher economics; she's been a club leader for several years. Grace, the second girl, graduated from the state school of home economics at Canton, is married, living on the home farm, and is leader of her local club. Their brother, Claude, is next in order -- He graduated from the state agricultural school at Canton, was chosen to represent New York State one year at the national club camp here in Washington, and then as the state candidate for leadership honors. He's married, living on the home farm, is leader of a club of boys, and is master of the local grange -- of 400 members.

BAKER:

Now hold on a minute -- we're likely to be talking all day about the members of this one family. But you have told me that one family has produced 7 club members -- and at least three leaders.

ROGERS:

Yes -- and at the same time they've developed for themselves one of the finest dairy herds in the county -- and as fine a home as you'd want to visit.

BAKER:

You make me want to meet the Moultons -- up there in St. Lawrence county New York. But now -- I'm curious about some of the other things you learned in the study you made of club leaders. What else did you try to find out?

DIXON:

One thing that we included in our studies was finding out about the problems that local leaders have in their work.

BAKER:

What did you find out?

CLAYTON:

One thing leaders in South Carolina have difficulty with is helping club members complete their project records.

DIXON:

Some of the leaders in my county seem to think they need more training. They're given the job of teaching a lot of things to boys and girls -- and even though they know it themselves -- sometimes they don't know quite how to go about teaching it to someone else.

BAKER:

Well -- I suppose those are two things that you'll probably take into account when you go back home and start to work again.

ROGERS:

Certainly it is--- I'm going to give my leaders every chance to get all the training they want.

BAKER:

Now that gives me an idea. You fellows are going back to your jobs -- either at the end of this semester -- or in June -- full of new ideas, and inspiration. Maybe there are several things that you'll be doing differently -- or ideas that will have changed. What about setting out some guideposts for your own 4-H Club work in 1939.

CLAYTON:

One thing that I want to do -- and I'm going to pass it along to everyone that I work with in South Carolina -- is to figure out the things that each community needs, and then develop our 4-H Club work so it meets the interests and needs of the boys and girls in that community. That isn't a new idea at all, but I've had it brought to my attention more forcibly in the studies that I've been taking this fall and winter. And that's going to be one of my guideposts for 1939.

ROGERS:

I hadn't thought of it before as a guidepost -- but one thing that I want to do when I get back is to get some of the older club boys in my county to thinking about the matter of land use. The boys themselves may not be able to solve that problem during this new year -- but before many years they'll be the land owners and the taxpayers of St. Lawrence county, and they'll come face to face with the problem of land use. I want them to have some ideas about it before that time.

DIXON:

One thing that I hope to do is to put even more emphasis on our older youth work -- work with boys and girls who are beyond the 4-H Club age, but not old enough that they fit into adult groups. We've been getting these older youths organized into clubs for several years -- more than 11 hundred of them in 1937. And I think that it's one thing that we're going to do more of during the coming years -- help these young people adjust themselves in the adult society which they're about to enter.

CLAYTON:

That's something we're all going to have to give more attention to. And another thing that I hope we'll spend more time with in South Carolina is conservation work. Here's a copy of our state club paper -- and the entire back page is filled with letters from boys and girls who have attended our conservation camps. This girl says that she planted 150 native trees and shrubs around her family home; here's one from a boy who says that his family's entire farm is now terraced to conserve the soil; this girl assembled a nature study library for her 4-H Club; here's a letter from a boy who says that he has made five maps of his family's farm -- each one showing a different characteristic of the soil -- and those maps are to be the basis of the conservation program on their farm.

Conservation work is growing -- and I'm hoping to see more of it in South Carolina.

BAKER:

And how about one or two guideposts for 4-H Club boys and girls -- as we go into a new year.



DIXON:

It's hard to improve on some of the guideposts that have been used in 4-H Club work for a quarter of a century -- Make the Best Better.

ROGERS:

I think it's always worth reminding club members that the true 4-H club member can win without boasting and lose without squawking.

CLAYTON:

And I'd like to borrow something that Bert told us about one of the club leaders in St. Lawrence county -- the one who said "I get more out of my work than I put into it." I'd like to say to club members -- "The more you put into club work, the more you'll get out of it."

BAKER:

Seems to me that's a pretty good collection of guideposts for directing club work down the pathway of 1939. And thanks to all three of you men for being with us today.

Our three guests have been Bert Rogers, club agent of St. Lawrence county, New York; Paul Dixon, county club agent of Carroll county, New Hampshire; and Leon Clayton, assistant state club leader from South Carolina. These men are making better club workers out of themselves -- by taking graduate work in the Department of Agriculture and Universities here in Washington, and we couldn't miss the opportunity of bringing them together -- so you could meet them.

